

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6065

S E C R E T KINSHASA 0420

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

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SUBJECT: MOBUTU DISCUSSES SOVIET SECURITY THREAT, PROPOSES
TO SEND SPECIAL EMISSARY TO WASHINGTON

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT MOBUTU SUMMONED ME EVENING JAN 16
TO MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS: (A) GOZ WAS GOING AHEAD WITH
LETTER TO UN SECURITY COUNCIL INFORMING IT OF SOVIET/CUBAN
THREAT TO ZAIRE AND ASKING FOR INVESTIGATION OF DILOLO
ATTACK; (B) GOZ WOULD LIKE OFFICIAL ASSURANCES THAT US
WILL "GUARANTEE" ZAIRE'S SECURITY IN FACE OF CURRENT THREATS;
AND (C) MOBUTU INTENDS TO DISCUSS SUCH ASSURANCES IN
LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD, TO BE DELIVERED IN WASHINGTON
BY NGUZA KARL-I-BOND. END SUMMARY.

2. MOBUTU, JUST BACK FROM PERSONAL INSPECTION OF DAMAGE
AT DILOLO, SAID HE HAD DECIDED TO PROCEED WITH LETTER
TO PRESIDENT OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL INFORMING HIM MPLA/CUBAN/
SOVIET ATTACK ON ZAIRE AT DILOLO AND ASKING THAT UN TEAM
BE SENT TO INVESTIGATE. HE SAID HE HAD NO INTENTION
OF SEEKING COUNCIL MEETING AT THIS TIME. HE SAID
ARTILLERY FROM ANGOLA HAD DONE CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE TO
CIVILIAN STRUCTURES IN DILOLO AND THAT TWO BRIDGES,
"JOINTLY OWNED," ACROSS THE RIVER DIVIDING ANGOLA AND
ZAIRE HAD BEEN DESTROYED. I RECALLED EMBASSY DISCUSSIONS
WITH GOZ SOME WEEKS AGO WHEN GOZ FIRST RAISED POSSIBILITY
OF COMMUNICATING WITH SECURITY COUNCIL AND OUR ASSURANCES TO
GOZ AT THAT TIME THAT WE WOULD LEND DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT.

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I SAID I WAS SURE WE WOULD BE JUST AS READY NOW AS WE

WERE THEN TO SUPPORT ZAIRE IN THE COUNCIL, ALTHOUGH I HAD NOT YET RECEIVED GUIDANCE FROM WASHINGTON ON THIS POINT. MOBUTU SAID HE VIEWED THIS MATTER SERIOUSLY AND NEEDED AS MUCH INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AS HE COULD GET.

3. MOBUTU THEN SHIFTED TO ZAIRE'S SECURITY PROBLEM IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. HE SAID HE KNEW BOTH BULA AND BISENGIMANA HAD ALREADY DISCUSSED WITH ME ZAIRE'S GROWING CONCERN THAT IT WAS IN DANGER OF BEING STRANGLERED FROM ALL SIDES; THAT SOVIET ACTIVITIES AND INFLUENCE IN NEIGHBORING STATES (I.E., ANGOLA, CABINDA, CONGO, UGANDA, TANZANIA) POSED INCREASING RISKS FOR THE SECURITY OF ZAIRE'S VITAL TRADE ROUTES AND UNPROTECTED INFRASTRUCTURE. THAT ZAIRE NEEDED MORE MILITARY ASSISTANCE WAS EVIDENT, AND BULA HAD ALREADY ASKED FOR THAT. BUT, MOBUTU WENT ON, WHAT ZAIRE REALLY NEEDED WAS SOME FORM OF OFFICIAL ASSURANCES THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD STAND BY ZAIRE IN THE FACE OF THE GROWING THREAT FROM THE WORLD'S OTHER GREAT POWER; THAT THE US WOULD "GUARANTEE ZAIRE'S SECURITY." DURING THE ENSUING DISCUSSION MOBUTU, WHILE NOT REFINING OR ELABORATING HIS VIEWS OF THIS POINT, MADE CLEAR THAT HE WOULD WANT THE SOVIETS TO KNOW ABOUT WHATEVER ASSURANCES WE COULD GIVE. AT ANOTHER POINT HE SAID WHAT HE HAD IN MIND WAS AN OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENT THAT THE US WOULD VIEW ANY THREAT TO ZAIRE'S SECURITY AS A THREAT TO OUR OWN. HE SAID HE REALIZED WE HAD NO FORMAL SECURITY ALLIANCE AND WAS NOT SUGGESTING ONE NOW; HE ALSO KNEW THE US HAD ASSISTED ZAIRE WITH ITS DEFENSE NEEDS EVER SINCE INDEPENDENCE AND THAT OUR HELP HAD BEEN VITAL TO HIS COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT. BUT NOW ZAIRE FACED A NEW AND MUCH MORE SERIOUS SITUATION, AND IT WAS IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR LONG-STANDING ASSOCIATION THAT HE NOW LOOKED TO US FOR ASSURANCES THAT WE WILL STAND BY ZAIRE. I REPLIED THAT WE UNDERSTOOD AND SYMPATHIZED WITH ZAIRE'S DIFFICULTIES, THAT AS THE PRESIDENT KNEW MUCH OF OUR EFFORTS OVER THE PAST YEAR HAD BEEN DIRECTED TOWARD ASSISTING ZAIRE'S SECURITY NEEDS, AND THAT WE TOO WERE CONCERNED ABOUT SOVIET INTENTIONS IN THIS PART OF AFRICA AND HAD NO INTENTION OF LETTING OUR FRIENDS DOWN.

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4. MOBUTU THEN SAID HE INTENDED TO RAISE THIS MATTER IN A PERSONAL LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD, AND THAT HE WOULD LIKE IT TO BE DELIVERED BY NGUZA KARL-I-BOND, PERMANENT SECRETARY OF THE POLITICAL BUREAU, AS HIS SPECIAL EMISSARY. I EXPRESSED PERSONAL VIEW THAT MR. NGUZA WOULD BE WELCOME, AND THERE FOLLOWED SOME DISCUSSION OF THE SECRETARY'S TRAVEL PLANS NEXT WEEK. MOBUTU INDICATED HE WANTED TO DISPATCH NGUZA

AT AN EARLY DATE, ALTHOUGH PRECISE PLANS WERE LEFT UNCLEAR.

5. COMMENT:I REALIZE THERE ARE FACTORS IN MOBUTU'S PROPOSAL FOR "ASSURANCES" THAT WILL REQUIRE MOST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, AND I WILL PROVIDE MY OWN COMMENTS ON THIS LATER. FOR THE PRESENT, HOWEVER, I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE MAKE AT LEAST A PRELIMINARY AND POSITIVE RESPONSE TO MOBUTU, AND THAT WE DO SO QUICKLY. HE IS CLEARLY DETERMINED TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN MAINTAINING AND FURTHER GALVANIZING AFRICAN POLITICAL SUPPORT ON ANGOLA (DISCUSSED SEPTTEL) IN THE WAKE OF THE ADDIS SUMMIT, AND I THINK WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE HIM ON THIS COURSE BY BEING AS SYMPATHETIC AND RESPONSIVE AS WE REASONABLY CAN TO HIS OWN CONCERNS. I BELIEVE SENDING NGUZA TO WASHINGTON FOR DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE MOST USEFUL AT THIS TIME. HE IS ONE OF THE GO'S MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE AND ARTICULATE (IN ENGLISH) SPOKESMEN, AND CERTAINLY A MORE SOPHISTICATED INTERLOCUTOR THAN BULA. SPECIFICALLY, I RECOMMEND THAT WE (A) REASSURE MOBUTU OF OUR CONTINUED READINESS TO GIVE OUR OWN SUPPORT TO THE GOZ IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND TO ASSIST IN GAINING THE COOPERATION OF LTNER COUNCIL MEMBERS; (B) WELCOME NGUZA'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON AT EARLY DATE; (C) ENCOURAGE MOBUTU TO PURSUE HIS ACTIVE DIPLOMATIC ROLE ON ANGOLA AND ASSURE HIM OF OUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND COOPERATION IN HIS EFFORTS.

6. WOULD HOPE I CAN BE AUTHORIZED RESPOND ALONG THESE LINES BEFORE MOBUTU RECEIVES NEGATIVE NEWS ON SMTF JAN 19.
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